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20 May 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 20 May 1969

DD/I called attention to two highly laudatory appreciations of our sessions with the Brookings participants [redacted] [redacted] He highlighted two favorable comments from Standard Oil of New Jersey and one from the General Electric Manager for R&D. All remarked about the candor of the briefings, and the GE Manager noted his understanding of the checks and balances exercised by the Congress over the Agency's program.

Godfrey called attention to the Turkish situation, where the high command may take over the government if a constitutional amendment restoring political rights passes. He noted that some Senate members are simply leaving town in order to avoid taking a position on the matter.

Godfrey called attention to a Reuters report quoting a Moscow announcement to the effect that some Warsaw Pact maneuvers will be undertaken with Rumanian force participation. He noted that we have no confirming information and are looking into the matter.

[redacted] reported that General Carroll's damage report on the Pueblo has now been completed and is in hand. He recommended limited distribution of the report, and the Director endorsed his view that it be considered next week at a closed session of USIB.

DD/S noted that the Air America Board of Directors is meeting here today.

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Carver reported that Secretary Laird had nothing of special interest during their session yesterday morning. In response to the Director's question, Carver noted that he has no idea what was behind Secretary Laird's appeal for prompt release of all American prisoners of war.

DD/S&T noted that his session yesterday with Messrs. Murphy and Gray of PFIAB went well.

DDCI mentioned that he received a good briefing from General Carter yesterday on NSA.

The Director called attention to Stewart Alsop's article in the May 26 issue of Newsweek. He commented that Mr. Alsop seems to get at the root of the ABM problem.

The Director noted the Navy's repeated requests for us to release "True Sons of the Soviets." He asked the DDCI to get in touch with Admiral Harlfinger to determine if possible what is behind these repeated suggestions that the film be made available to the public.

The Director called attention to the most recent "Quarterly Report on the Career Training Program" and noted some of the reasons given by Career Trainees for having decided to leave the Agency. After some discussion the Director asked the Executive Director to make the report available to each Deputy.

[Redacted Signature Box]

L. K. White

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## Laird Appeals to Vietnam Foe on P.O.W. Release

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as missing in action in the Vietnam war, 400 to 800 are believed to be held by North Vietnam and 100 to 500 by the Vietcong.

Neither has been willing, Mr. Laird said, to supply the names of prisoners, as required by the 1949 Geneva conventions on prisoners of war. North Vietnam, a signatory to those conventions, has repeatedly insisted that captured pilots are not war prisoners but "war criminals" not subject to the conventions.

Since last December, the officials here said, when there were reports of imminent prisoner releases in Soviet and Japanese broadcasts—later disavowed by Hanoi—there has been "no progress" in private contacts.

### U. S. 'Continues to Hope'

Nonetheless, Mr. Laird said the Administration "continues to hope for meaningful progress on the matter of prisoner release in the Paris discussions."

In his speech last week on efforts to settle the war, President Nixon urged that arrangements be made for the release

of prisoners on both sides "at the earliest possible time."

Pending an agreement, the Defense Secretary called on North Vietnam and the Vietcong to provide the names of all captives, release immediately all sick and wounded prisoners, permit impartial inspections of P.O.W. camps, provide "proper treatment" for all prisoners and allow them to send and receive mail on a regular basis.

Officials in Hanoi have said repeatedly that American captives are being treated humanely, according to Richard G. Capen Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

### Impartial Inspection Sought

"Hanoi's claims of proper treatment and its controlled visits with a handful of selected news people are not adequate substitutes for complete and impartial inspections," he said.

Only six prisoners have been released by North Vietnam, Mr. Capen said, and all of them spoke of having been held in solitary confinement for varying periods during their captivity. He implied that others were believed to have been similarly isolated.

Recent propaganda photos, he said, raise questions about medical attention, showing that "some prisoners are continuing to suffer from injuries incurred at the time they were downed," in some cases many months after capture.

In five years, he noted, fewer than 100 prisoners have been allowed to write their families, averaging less than two letters a year.

He said some North Vietnamese photos raised false hopes among the families of prisoners because of confusion about identity. In one case, 20 wives believed that a prisoner in a photo was her husband, he said, adding: "This prisoner remains unidentified."

The Defense Secretary called attention to the fact that more than 200 servicemen had been listed as missing in action or as captives for more than three and a half years. He said this exceeded the period of imprisonment in World War II.

# Laird Appeals to Enemy To Release U.S. Captives

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 19—Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird appealed to North Vietnam and the Vietcong today for the prompt release of all American prisoners of war. He

also called for the immediate release of the sick and wounded among the 500 to 1,300 Americans believed to be held by the enemy.

"The North Vietnamese have claimed that they are treating men humanely," Mr. Laird said at a Defense Department news conference. "I am distressed by the fact that there is clear evidence that this is not the case."

Mr. Laird and other Pentagon and State Department officials mentioned such matters as a lack of adequate medical care, to support the allegation of inhumane treatment.

Some officials said privately that they were reluctant to detail incidents of brutality for fear of jeopardizing the chances of an early release of prisoners. They cited the French experience in 1954, when the first men to be freed by the Vietnamese Communists charged atrocities and the release of others was held up.

## 1,300 Listed as Missing

Administration sources said that one purpose of the news conference today was to try to marshal public opinion in an effort to obtain an agreement on the release of prisoners.

Officials noted that if private talks to obtain the release of prisoners proved fruitless, as appears to be the case, the spur of public opinion must be resorted to.

Administration officials say that of the more than 1,300 American fighting men listed

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BY STEWART ALSOP

## 'TIS DEATH, AND DEATH, AND DEATH INDEED'

**WASHINGTON**—To understand the reality behind the great controversy over the ABM, it may be useful to turn from generalities, and consider the following specific situation:

**Time:** The mid-'70s, at a moment of great crisis. In Moscow, the new "Marshals' Presidium" has delivered an ultimatum, and the United States has rejected it.

**Place:** The Cabinet Room of the White House during a meeting of the National Security Council.

*The President is speaking when what looks like a large television screen in a corner of the room emits a loud buzzing noise, and black letters begin to race implacably across its surface:* OSC (1)\* identifies approx 500 surface missile firings, Siberian area.

**THE PRESIDENT** (*presses a button*): You're sure, general?

**VOICE FROM SCREEN:** Identification positive, sir.

*Almost immediately, new words appear on the screen:* OTH (2) positive identification 500-plus SS-9's on trajectory over Arctic on course toward North Central U.S. Impact approx 23 minutes.

**THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF:** Looks like a counterforce strike, sir. Better get ready to empty the holes.

*The President nods his head, says nothing. Eight minutes pass. Again the urgent letters on the screen:* BMEWS (3) definitely identifies aim points 520 incoming multiple warhead SS-9's on Minuteman sites North Central U.S. No population center aim points.

*The President looks at his watch. Fifteen minutes to go. His hand hovers over the special line to SAC, and returns to a yellow pad, on which he is doodling. "138 Ams," he writes, then "109 Sots." Eight minutes to impact.*

**VOICE FROM SCREEN:** PAR (4) locked on incomers, sir, urgently request permission activate ABM.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Fire away, general.

**CHAIRMAN, JCS:** Mr. President, when are you going to empty those holes?

**THE PRESIDENT** (*sits silent for a full minute, then presses a button*): Air Defense, how many Minutemen do you estimate will survive?

**VOICE FROM SCREEN:** Four hundred minimum assured survival, sir.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Assured, general?  
**VOICE FROM SCREEN:** Assured, sir. We're hoping 500.

*Another agonizing minute passes.*

**THE PRESIDENT:** Gentlemen, I have decided to try to ride this one out.

All this may sound like one of those drama-in-high-places Washington novels. But the warning sequence is technically accurate, and the Presidential doodles also reflect a reality. According to one Pentagon estimate, 138 million Americans and 109 million Russians would die in a full "anti-city" nuclear exchange. Nobody, of course, really knows how many would die.

These horrible figures suggest why President Nixon wants his ABM system. The "intelligence community" has reported to the President certain evidence that the Soviets may be attempting to achieve a "first-strike counterforce capability," in the jargon of the trade. In other words, they may be trying to build a weapons system which would enable them to knock out or to threaten to knock out the Minuteman missile complex and our other major delivery systems in a surprise attack.

## LOGICAL TARGET

There are two chief items of evidence. First, at present production rates, the Soviets should have about 500 SS-9 missiles with three separately targeted multimegaton warheads by the mid-'70s. These huge missiles lack the range to reach most major population centers on both U.S. coasts, and they are far more accurate than an anti-city weapon needs to be. Thus their logical target seems to be the Minuteman missile complex, in the North Central U.S., well within range of the SS-9. The chief Soviet anti-city weapon is supposed to be the longer-range, less accurate S-11.

Second, the Soviets are investing \$60 million per sub in a fleet of "attack boats," designed to "tail" the U.S. atomic submarine fleet, and attack on order. The liberal politicians and scientists who oppose the ABM dismiss such evidence as "thin and unconvincing." They may be right—nobody really knows what the Russians will have six or seven years from now. But they could be wrong. And the President, with the survival of the country at stake, must take the intelligence estimates with

The liberals also claim that the Safeguard system is unworkable in any case. Again they may be right. His experts have assured the President that the system will perform its function of protecting a decisive portion of the Minuteman complex, but they could be wrong. Again, nobody really knows. The first point to note is that the Russians, for planning purposes, *must* assume that the ABM system will work. This in itself would tend to make a first strike less likely, which is the primary purpose of the system.

## DIRTY WARHEADS

The second point to note is that no future President could possibly hope, lacking an ABM system, to "ride this one out." He would have to "empty the holes"—like the Minuteman missiles. If he did not, he might find himself with very few holes left to empty, or none at all. He would then lack the means to "survive a surprise attack and devastate the attacker," which John Kennedy rightly insisted was essential to American survival. With an effective ABM system, a President might choose to ride out a counterforce strike, hoping still for mutual death. Or he might choose to respond with a "counterforce second strike" against the still-full Russian holes, sparing the Russian people as long as the American people were spared.

To do either would be hideously risky, of course. A Russian counterforce strike could devastate much of the U.S. with fallout, if the Russians used dirty warheads and ground bursts. And the Russians might respond to a "counterforce second strike" by devastating the American cities. But the alternative—to "empty the holes," in a last horrible spasm of revenge—is not just hideously risky. In the haunting words of the old folk song, "For when the heart begins to bleed/'Tis death, and death, and death indeed."

This is why the complacent argument of Sen. William Fulbright and other liberals, that the U.S. can maintain its nuclear deterrent simply by "emptying the holes" seems so oddly purblind. It seems odder still that the leader in the liberals' fight to deny a future President a chance other than that between "Armageddon and surrender" (to quote President Kennedy again) should be Sen. Edward Kennedy. For he may well be that future President.

\* (1) Orbital Survey Craft. (2) Over the Horizon Radar. (3) Ballistic Missile Warning System. (4) Perimeter Acquisition Radar.